

March 4, 2021

Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to you today to urge you to support the passing of HB 6355: Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO). We must revisit this law! I do not intend to provide you with the statistics surrounding any of this as I am sure that will be provided to you in countless testimony. What you need to hear is my real-life story and how a new definition of who could pursue help in a time of crisis could mean life or death.

On December 9, 2018, my niece Emily Todd was murdered. If these redefined laws were in place at the time of her murder Emily and her family would have stood a much better chance in preventing her from being shot in the back of the head by a man who should have been in custody a week prior for multiple reasons.

Emily was not taken seriously on a phone call that was placed to a 911 operator in Bridgeport, CT. The man that killed her was threatening suicide and, in that moment, she told the operator she was afraid, and she knew he had a gun. She even mentions he is going to kill me for doing this.

Well that is exactly what happened. He killed her. Killed her with a gun that very much could have been taken from him the week prior if the proper follow up had happened and the right at risk protection orders were in place.

Clearly this man was not stable and should have been flagged to be investigated further. Even after entering a high-speed chase with police officers that was eventually called off, we were not able to take his gun away from him? The fact is, he had a weapon in his car that he was already threatening to use on himself, he also had a history of violence in the past. Just a year prior he was a suspect in a shooting that took place in Bridgeport. Someone like Emily, my family, or even just one caring police officer should have been enough to push to get a protection order and ultimately have his gun removed. We should be able to protect ourselves and our loved ones from this.

To me that seems like common sense in a world where we have a serious problem with gun related deaths. Emily was a bright light and only 25 years old. I write to you today in her honor and the safety of my 2 children who I am terrified raising in a world we have so much to work on. I ask you again to please revisit these ERPO laws and redefine them to save more lives. Lives like my niece Emily Todd who had a whole life ahead of her and taken senselessly.

Thank you for your time,

Erin Bond,

Bethel, CT

